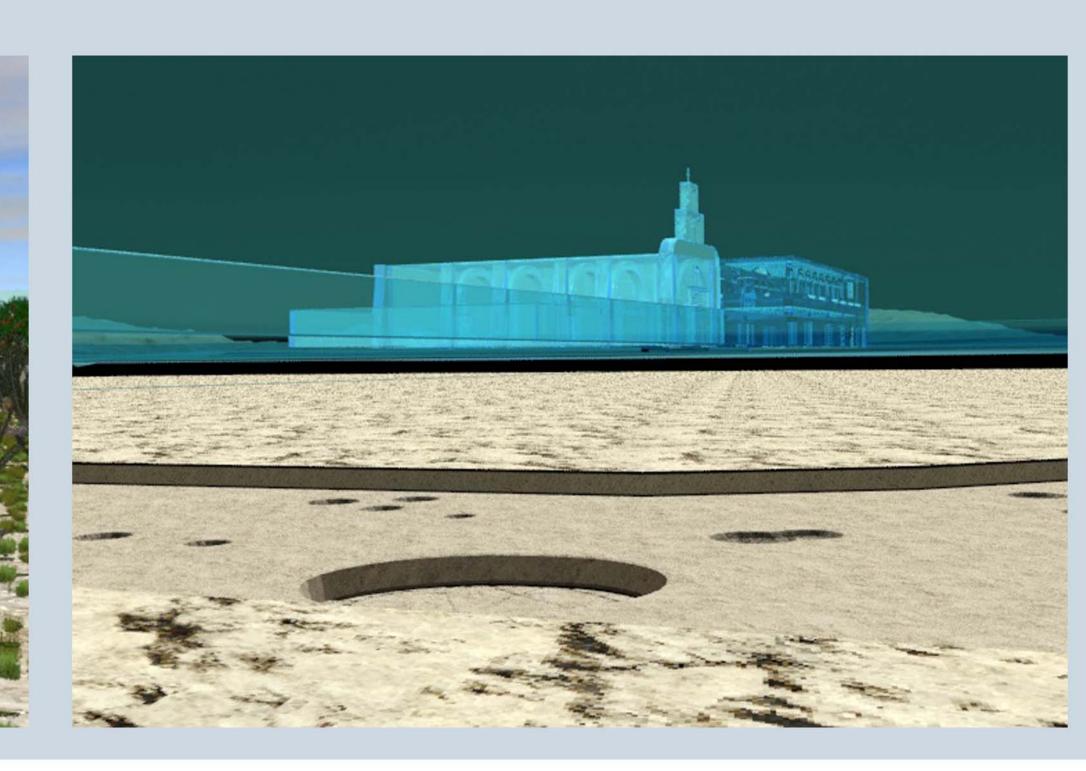
#### Tucson's Origins (2011)





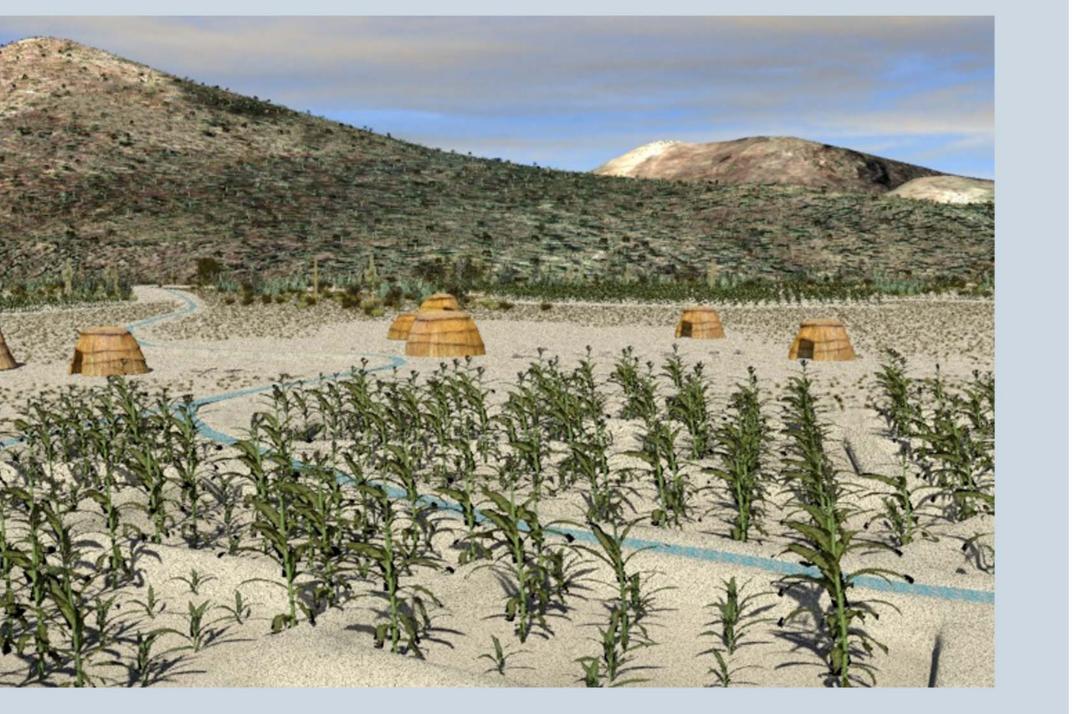












# Chuk Son to Tucson: Exploring 4000 Years of Human Experience in the Tucson Basin through the Digital Humanities Douglas W. Gann - Center for Desert Archaeology

#### Abstract

The past ten years of archaeological research in the Tucson Basin has revealed unexpected levels of detail about the nature of human habitation in the region, from the Early Agricultural Period through the era of global cross-cultural contacts. The Center for Desert Archaeology has been utilizing a wide range of new media technologies to explore and share how ideas of cultural continuity, technological change, and persistent places factor into the development of the current community in time and space.

#### Project Background

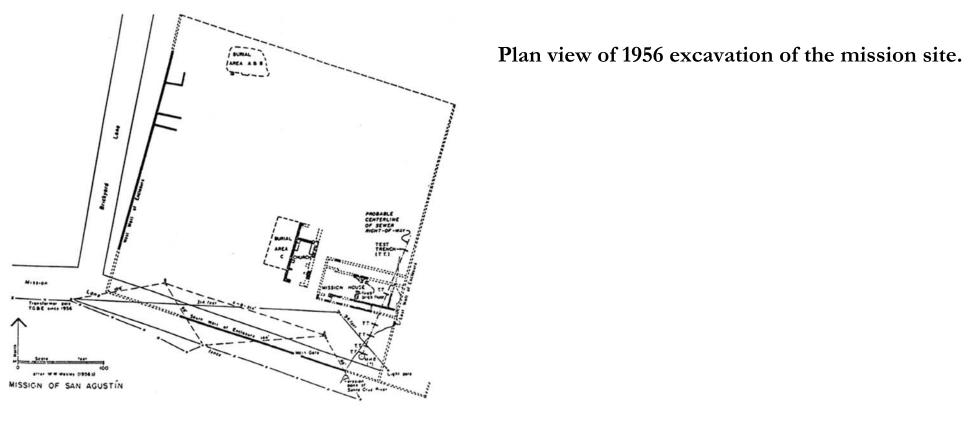
It all seemed so simple, so very logical. By 1999, it was known that downtown Tucson was a persistent place that had been the scene of almost 2,000 years of near continual occupation. It was thought that a downtown revitalization effort could use archaeological data to restore a sense of Tucson's place in space and time. Museums, reconstructions of historic and ancient architecture, and private development would breathe new life into a tired and depressed downtown economy. A funding mechanism was identified, presented to the voters, and the Rio Nuevo project was approved by an overwhelming majority of voters. The archaeological research that would form the foundation of the project was conducted, and it generated many surprising findings that pushed back the date of agriculture and agricultural villages in the Tucson Basin by an additional 2,000 years.

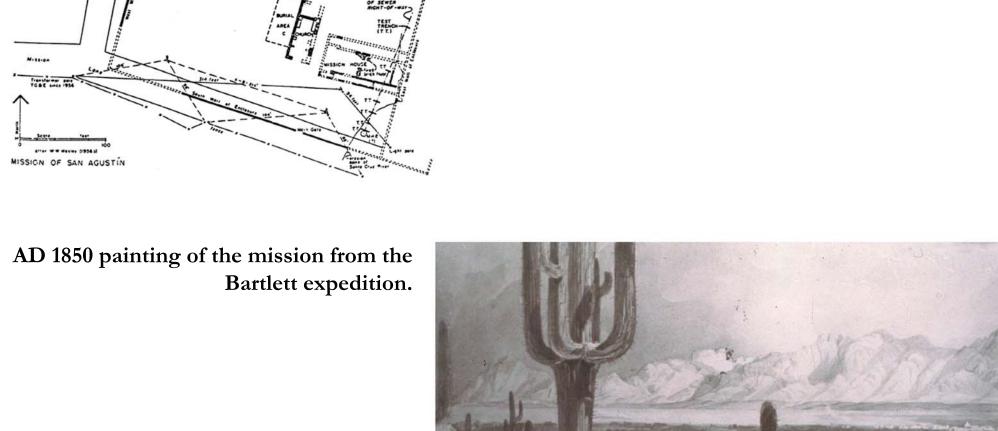
#### And then the project was killed by bumbling political bureaucracy.

The mayor and city managers did not believe that historical museums and archaeological parks could ever generate significant heritage tourism. The interpretive projects that were permitted to proceed were placed in the hands of architects who lacked any training or understanding of best practices in historical or archaeological interpretation. Crucial planning efforts were repeated, repeatedly, until over 200 million dollars had been spent on museums and parks that would never be constructed.

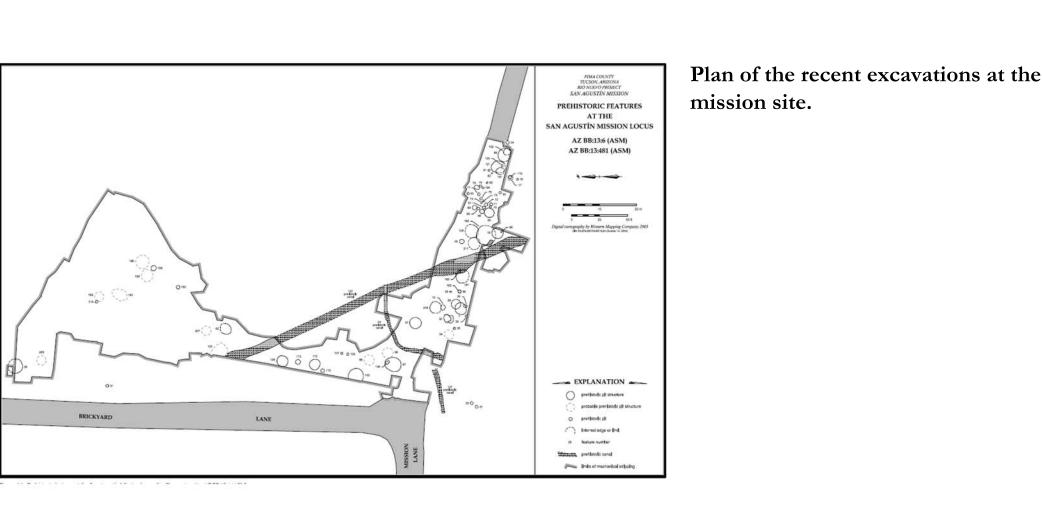
Meanwhile, archaeological research at nearby Early Agricultural Period villages exposed dramatic evidence of ancient farming life in the Tucson Basin. Work at places such as Las Capas provides us with a framework by which we can visualize the scenes of these ancient lifeways by utilizing digital humanities techniques to share the story of 4,000 years of human occupation in the Tucson Basin. The Center for Desert Archaeology has begun a long-term effort to build a true virtual museum that will utilize new media tools and techniques to demonstrate what Rio Nuevo could have been and, more importantly, share a fascinating account that will allow those living in and near Tucson to understand their place in a four-thousand-year continuum of human existence in this region.

# San Agustin Mission & Early Agricultural Period Deposits









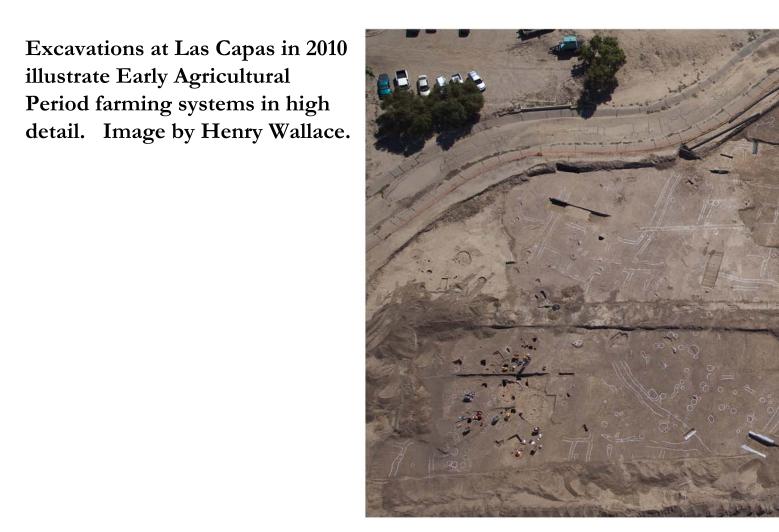


This image highlights the

below the mission-era

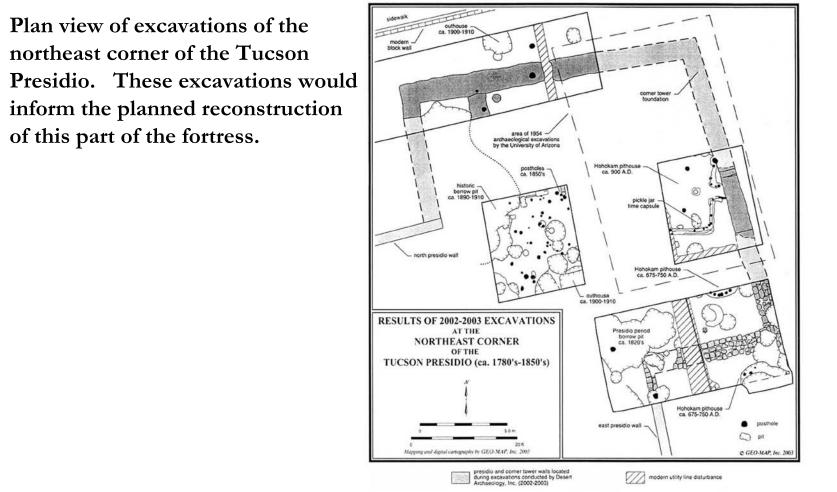
superposition of Early Agricultural

Period deposits just centimeters

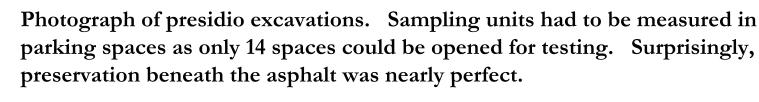


#### Plan view of excavations of the northeast corner of the Tucson

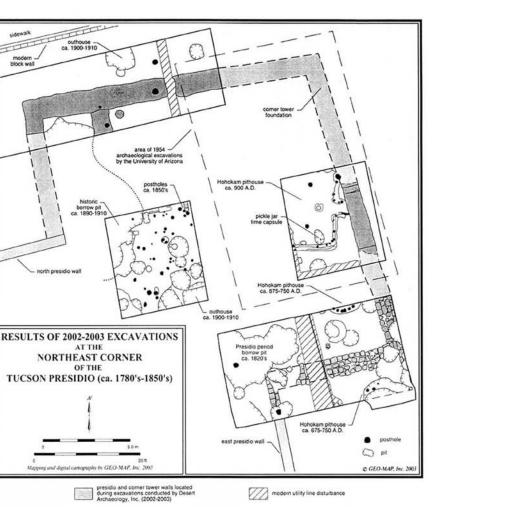
of this part of the fortress.







### The Tucson Presidio and Hohokam Houses





excavation of the same

Note the Hohokam

pit house beneath th

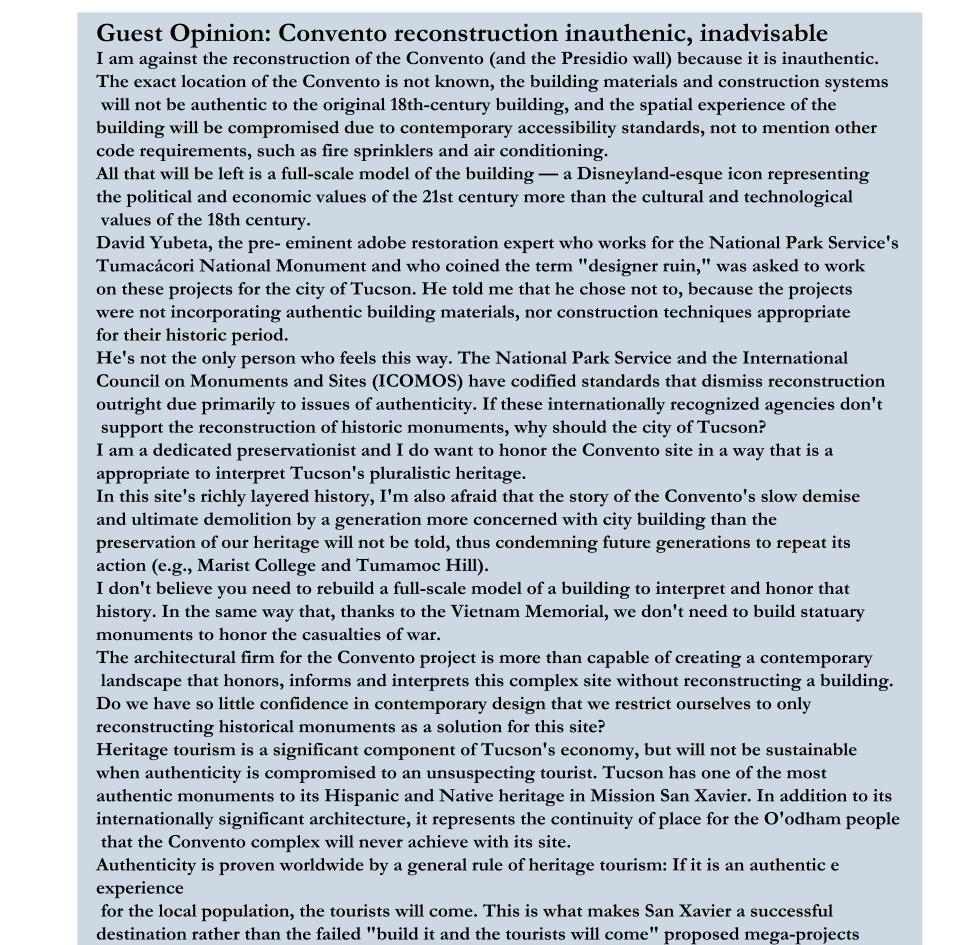
presidio adobe brick

presidio corner.

Desert Archaeology Inc. re-excavated this corner in 2003, locating the deposits that Haury had first identified, as well as a time capsule left by a local newspaper publisher. The time capsule contained a sarcastic message about Tucson's lack of a preservation ethic or appreciation of its

# Reconsidering Physical Reconstructions

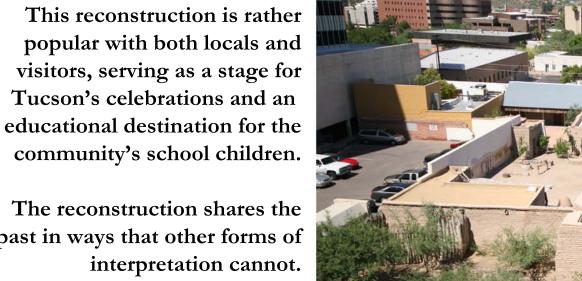
While the mission reconstruction was on temporary hold, the reconstruction of the torreon of the Tucson Presidio was completed. The day before the presidio reconstruction was to be opened to the public, local architect and historic preservationist Brooks Jeffery published the following editorial in the local newspaper.

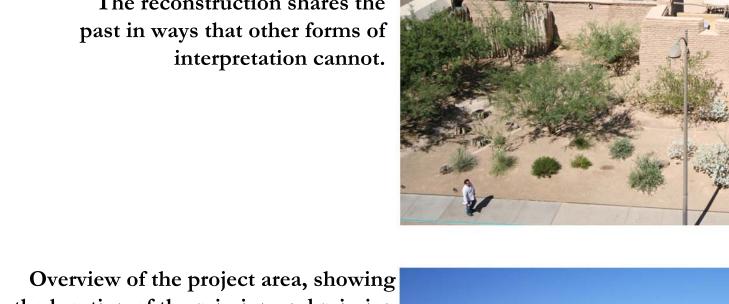


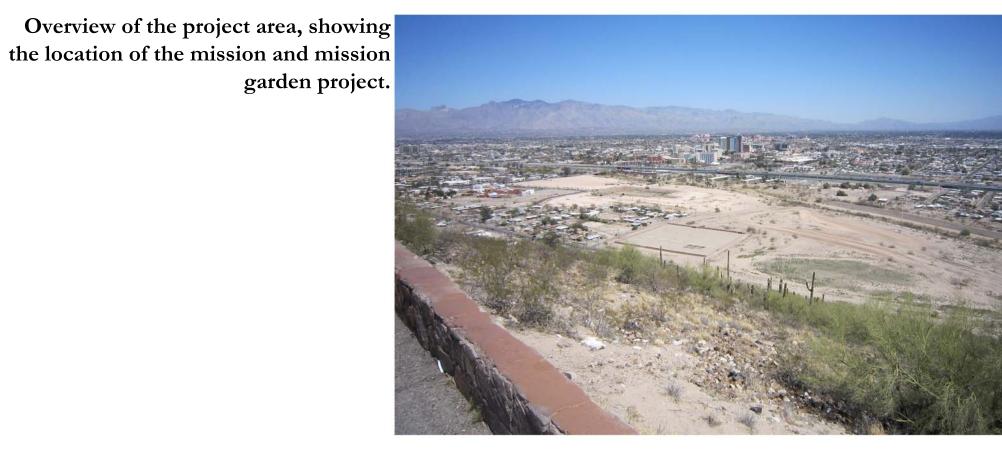
Despite this advice, the presidio opened to the public, and the mission garden wall was reconstructed. Was Mr. Jeffery Correct?

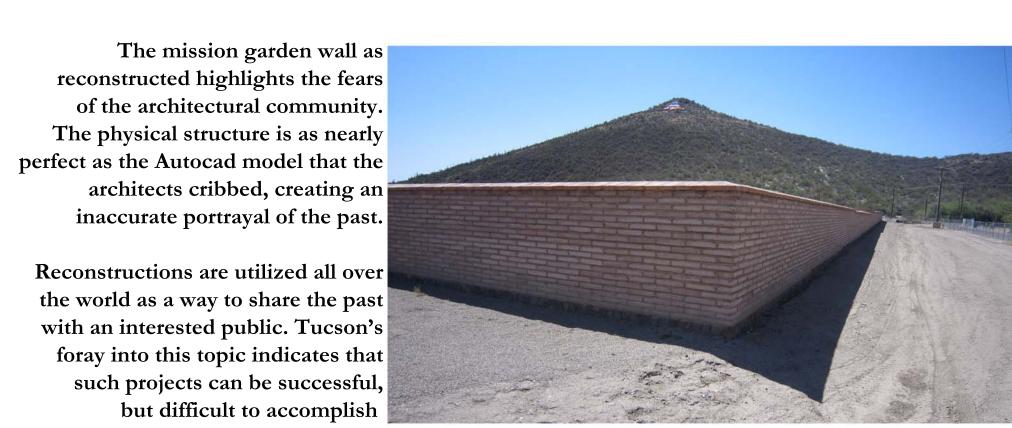
Powntown Redevelopment, let's remove the hype and make authenticity the new standard.

As the city of Tucson transitions out of Rio Nuevo and into a new identity as









#### Fading Between Time Periods in Tucson (2003) This visualization utilizes known landmarks to situate the viewer in familiar spaces in order to share the layering of deposits beneath downtown Tucson.











